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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

August 12, 2014

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The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Your announcement last week that the Commission will be holding a series of public roundtables to discuss approaches to protecting an open Internet was a much-needed step. This is an issue of fundamental importance to free speech and economic growth in the United States. It is critical that meaningful rules are put in place that protect consumers and promote innovation. While the roundtables the Commission is holding in Washington will help to promote further public input, I strongly urge you to expand your listening sessions outside of the Beltway.

In July, I held a Senate Judiciary Committee field hearing in Vermont on the importance of protecting an open Internet. That hearing allowed the Committee to hear from voices that otherwise would not have had an opportunity to be heard in Washington. These voices included small business owners like Cabot Orton of the Vermont Country Store and Lisa Groeneveld of Logic Supply, Inc. Both of these companies are great Vermont success stories thanks to the equalizing power of the Internet.

Mr. Orton explained how the Vermont Country Store, which was founded in 1945, now relies on Internet sales for 40 percent of its business. This allows his company to keep all of its 450 employees in Vermont. Ms. Groeneveld's company, Logic Supply, which designs and manufactures industrial computers for sale to customers all over the world, relies on its website for all of its revenue. The Internet allows Logic Supply to have a global reach from its headquarters in South Burlington, Vermont. I found their perspectives to be incredibly valuable and relevant to the current net neutrality discussion.

Mr. Orton and Ms. Groeneveld are only two of the thousands of Vermonters who care deeply about the need to maintain an open Internet. Vermonters are not alone, as over a million people from across the country have submitted comments to the Commission in its open Internet proceeding. Most of them will not be able to come to Washington to participate in the roundtables that have been scheduled, but their voices are more important than industry lobbyists and Members of Congress. Holding roundtables across the country will help ensure that Americans have a meaningful opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,

  
PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator

*This is important!*



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

August 27, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

Thank you for your letter encouraging the Commission to hold Open Internet roundtables across the country in order to ensure that Americans have a meaningful opportunity to participate in the debate about this very important issue.

The Commission announced on August 8, 2014, that it will host a series of Open Internet roundtable discussions in Washington, D.C., beginning in September of this year. The roundtables will provide an opportunity for Commission staff and other interested parties to have an open discussion about how the Commission can best accomplish its goal of protecting and promoting Internet openness. They will be open to the public, streamed live online, and both online viewers and those who attend the roundtables in person will have the opportunity to ask questions of Commission staff and other participants.

Over the past two months, I have engaged actively with the public to hear their views about the Commission's *Open Internet Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. I have met with innovators, investors, and start-ups in Silicon Valley, spoken with consumer groups and public interest leaders while in San Francisco, California, and participated in a community forum in Albuquerque, New Mexico. One of my staff, Gigi Sohn, held a Twitter town hall at Twitter headquarters in New York City to encourage the public to submit comments to be included in the record of the Commission's *Open Internet* proceeding, of which – after extending the comment period – we have received well over one million. The roundtables announced this month are a continuation of my efforts to engage with all parties to hear their important views about keeping the Internet open.

While my schedule for this fall has not yet been finalized, I look forward to keeping you apprised of the Commission's Open Internet outreach efforts. I welcome any additional input you may care to share and once again thank you for being in touch with me.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler